

# WEST LoTHIAN

## HOMEOWNER UPDATE

May 2024



Dear Homeowner,

The council is committed to ensuring the safety of all residents, and following on from our letter to you of 2 February 2024, we would like to advise you of current progress and future plans for the Council RAAC Replacement Project.

This is the first regular update designed to keep you informed of the progress of the RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) Roof Replacement Programme and the steps the council is taking to secure support for all residents impacted by RAAC in West Lothian.

### **CURRENT PROGRESS**

Following on from our letter of 2 February 2024, the project has been progressing with a number of intrusive surveys carried out in council houses to help the structural engineers assess the condition of the RAAC Planks and how they were used in the construction process. The information gained from these surveys is being used to help determine the programme and the construction methods the council will use during the RAAC Roof Replacement Project.

Through these surveys the council has also been able to determine that none of the walls in the council properties are made of RAAC. This has been confirmed for all of the council house types and for the common entrance blocks of flats. This information will allow the council to concentrate efforts in replacing the RAAC in the roofs of affected council properties.

### **COUNCIL CALL FOR SUPPORT FROM THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT**

We can also advise that at a meeting of West Lothian Council, held on 14 May 2024, the council has agreed to seek an early date for a meeting with the Minister of Housing to discuss the Scottish Government's role and support to the council, other landlords and homeowners who may be affected by RAAC.

In advance of this meeting with the Housing Minister, the council will facilitate meetings with

homeowners at an early date in Craigshill Livingston/Broxburn/Linlithgow/Bathgate with invitations to landlord RSL's. The purpose of these meetings will be for the council to meet with homeowners and for the issues raised to be reported to the Housing Minister.

The council is also seeking the support of all West Lothian constituency and Lothian regional MSP's, by requesting that they write to the Minister for Housing in support of the requirement for the Scottish Government to provide immediate support and financial assistance to homeowners and Registered Social Landlords.

### **TIMESCALES**

Since the initial letter to you on 2 February 2024, works have been ongoing continuing to survey council house types to allow the project to move forward. Currently the documents are being prepared for tender process which we are anticipating will be completed by 4 July 2024.

Work is expected to begin on site in August 2024, and continue through to December 2025. There will be regular communication with residents throughout the duration of the work in each of the locations.

### **INFORMATION FOR HOMEOWNERS**

We understand the concerns raised by some homeowners and fully acknowledge the challenges faced by homeowners that we have written to previously. Our approach to supporting homeowners aligns with current government policy and legislation, and whilst the maintenance and repair of private properties remains the sole responsibility of homeowners, we will continue to provide information. A comprehensive list of useful information points is listed below.

- **Qualified Professionals:** Contact information for Chartered Structural Engineers who can assess properties for RAAC and advise on any necessary actions: Royal Institute of Chartered

Surveyors <https://www.ricsfirms.com>,  
Institution of Structural Engineers Website:  
<https://www.istructe.org/find-an-engineer/>.

- If the original construction drawings are held these can be obtained from the Council Archives where members of the public can view archived drawings. You can find information about the Council Archive at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/archives>
- Independent Financial Advice: The following links provide information about available services and assistance. These include areas of financial support, practical support, advice as well as useful information which may assist you to increase or manage your income.
  - Money Advice Service: This free government-backed service provides guidance on a variety of financial topics, including home repairs and improvements. They may be able to offer general advice on potential funding options for RAAC remediation, although they won't provide specific financial advice: <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en>
  - Citizens Advice Scotland: This charity offers free, confidential advice on a range of issues, including housing and finances. They may be able to point homeowners in the direction of relevant resources or support services: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/>
  - The Advice Shop: The Advice Shop is a free, impartial and confidential service to help the people of West Lothian with a focus to alleviate poverty and to promote inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy. They may be able to direct homeowners to available support regarding financial wellbeing by maximising income and reducing outgoings: [Advice Shop - West Lothian Council](#)
  - Financial Conduct Authority (FCA): The FCA regulates financial services firms in the UK, including financial advisors. Homeowners can use the FCA's website to check the firms or person they are dealing with is listed on the Register: <https://register.fca.org.uk/s/>

- The [Scheme of Assistance](#) provides homeowners with information and guidance to help them effectively maintain and repair their own properties.
- Information on the council website <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/raac-council-housing>

I hope the above provides you with an update on progress to date with the council remediation project and the assistance and information available to homeowners. Should you have any enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the team on [HIO@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:HIO@westlothian.gov.uk) or call (01506) 280000. Officers will respond to your enquiries as soon as possible thereafter.

## FUTURE UPDATES

If you would like future updates via e-mail please let us know by emailing your name and address to [HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk)